M20 Heroic – A Microlite20 Variant

Definition: Player Characters (PCs)

A PC is any character controlled by a player that is not the Game Master (GM). Player Characters have the following numeric traits (followed by a definition):

Abilities

Strength Score (Str): measures a character's physical strength.
Dexterity Score (Dex): measures a character's agility and nimbleness.
Intelligence Score (Int): measures a character's ability to think and reason.
Charisma Score (Cha): measures a character's strength of will and personality.
A **modifier** for each ability, used for calculating the other traits.

Combat Statistics

Attack Bonus (AB): chance to damage an enemy with a weapon.
Magic Bonus (MB): chance to successfully use magic.
Defence Bonus (DB): chance to avoid being damaged by a weapon.
Damage Bonus (DMG): increases the damage you cause with successful weapon attacks.
Hit Points (HP): vitality, endurance and morale; do not represent physical condition.
Wound Points (WP): physical condition, life force
Movement Speed (SPD): the number of squares you can move during your turn in combat.

Resistances

Fortitude Bonus (Fort): chance to resist effects targeting the body's toughness (e.g. poison).
Reflex Bonus (Ref): chance to resist effects targeting the body's reflexes.
Perception Bonus (Per): chance to notice something or being aware of something.
Willpower Bonus (Will): chance to resist effects targeting the mind.

Advancement

Level (LVL): used to measure the character's overall power compared to other creatures in the world.
Experience (XP): used to determine when the character's level increases.

Definition: Character class

A character's class provides hints for the player how to act out their characters as well as it modifies some of the character's traits. Every class description features the following entries that detail how a character's traits are modified.

Primary Ability: this ability score automatically increases by +1 every 3 levels (3rd, 6th, 9th, etc).
Attack: added to the character's ***AB***
Magic: added to the character's ***MB*** ("none" means the character's ***MB*** stays 0)
Resistance: added to the character's ***Resistances***
Equipment: determines the starting equipment for the character.
Special: special rules for the character class are mentioned here

Definition: Ability Score Modifiers & Special Rules

Characters with ability modifiers above +0 automatically become subject to the special rules detailed in the following table:

Modifier	Strength	Dexterity	Intelligence	Charisma
+1	Wear light armour without a penalty to attack and defence rolls.	Wield shields without a penalty to attack and defence rolls.	Read/Write and speak a foreign language.	+2 bonus to checks made to convince people.
+2	Wear medium armour without a penalty to attack and defence rolls.	Your receive a +1 bonus to your SPD while wearing only light or no armour.	Choose a topic. +4 bonus to checks made regarding that topic.	+2 bonus to checks made to lie / detect lies.
+3	Wear heavy armour without a penalty to attack and defence rolls.	The penalty for attacking with two melee weapons decreases by 2.	You occasionally receive clues from the GM.	You don't suffer penalties for interacting with people of foreign cultures.
+4	+4 DMG with melee weapons.	+4 DMG with ranged weapons.	Select one special rule from another class. You benefit from this rule from now on.	+8 bonus to hp
+5	You may move enemies of up to your size 1 square after a successful melee attack.	You may move before and after making an attack (but you cannot exceed your SPD).	Casting magic spells costs you 1 hp less.	You attract 1d6 followers per level (the GM determines which).
+6 or higher	You may reroll any damage roll in melee once.	You may reroll any attack roll once.	You may reroll any magic roll once.	Allies that can hear and see you receive a +1 bonus to all rolls.

Definition: Check

A check is one roll of a twenty-sided die where the result can be modified for different reasons. A check serves to determine whether an action is successful or not. In order to do that, the modified result of the die roll is compared to a number, the so called ***Difficulty Class*** (DC). If the modified result of the die roll is **greater than** or **equal to** the DC, the action is successful, else it failed.
The DC and modifiers for a check are set by the GM. As a general rule, a character receives a +2 bonus to a check for every beneficial circumstance or detail the player gives while describing the action the character tries to perform. Any hindering circumstance may incur a -2 penalty to the check (again, the GM decides whether a penalty applies). The following table gives a guideline on how to set check DCs.

DC	Description
10	A **normal** task, an average person has a good chance to succeed
15	A **hard** task, requires some time and the right tools for average people
20	A **very hard** task, only the skilled have a real chance to succeed
25	A **heroic** task, a lot of luck and skill is required
30	An **epic** task, only a true master, maybe with divine help can succeed

Definition: Roll

A roll is used to determine a certain number, often a DC. The result of the roll equals 1d20 + bonus indicated by the name. Examples: A defence roll is the result of 1d20 and the character's defence bonus. A reflex roll is the result of 1d20 and the character's reflex bonus.

Definition: Attacks and Defence

An attack requires a successful attack roll to deal damage. An attack roll is a check using a character's ***AB*** as a modifier. The creature targeted by the attack makes a defence roll, with the result being used as the DC for the attack roll.
If the attack is successful, the attacker rolls for damage, as indicated by the weapon he uses and adds his damage bonus. The creature targeted by the attack loses that much hp. If the creature has 0 or less hit points, it loses one wound point for every 5 points of damage dealt.

Definition: Armour

Armour is protective gear worn on the body in order to decrease the chance to take damage. Thus armour increases a character's DB while worn. Depending on the type of armour worn, the character may suffer some penalties. Shields a free hand to be used and can be worn together with armour. The effects of armour and shields stack.

Type	Defence Bonus	Maximum Speed	Penalty
light armour	+2	unaffected	-2
medium armour	+5	5	-4
heavy armour	+8	4	-6
small shield	+1	unaffected	-1
large shield	+2	unaffected	-2

Type: the type of the armour.
Defence Bonus: this figure is added to the character's DB while wearing the armour / shield.
Maximum Speed: the character's speed is reduced to this figure while wearing the armour.
Penalty: the penalty is applied to all attack, defence and magic rolls and to all checks related to physical activity such as climbing or sneaking.

Definition: Weapon

A weapon determines the amount of damage the character deals with a successful attack. Weapons with a range of 1 square are called melee weapons. Weapons with a greater range are called ranged weapons. Shields cannot be used while employing a two-handed weapon.

Type	Damage	Range
light	1d6	1
one-handed	1d6+2	1
two-handed	2d6	1
one-handed missile	1d6	15
two-handed missile	1d6+2	30
throwing	1d6+2	5

Type: the type of the weapon.
Damage: the amount of damage the weapon deals on a successful attack.
Range: how many squares the target of the attack can be away; ranged weapons can also target creatures farther away (up to double range), but the attacker receives a -2 penalty to his attack roll when doing so.

Character Classes

Fighter

Primary Ability: Strength **Attack:** +5 **Magic:** +0 **Resistance:** Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1
Equipment:

- ◇ one-handed melee weapon and large shield **or** two-handed melee weapon
- ◇ any kind of armour
- ◇ any missile or throwing weapon

Special:
Toughness: the total penalty for lost wp is decreased by your Str modifier.
Stalwart: when targeted by an opposed effect, you may immediately spend 5 hp to increase your resistance bonus by +5.
Power Attack: before making an attack roll you can spend a number of hit points up to your level. Your DMG increases by that number for this attack.

Scout

Primary Ability: Dexterity **Attack:** +3 **Magic**: +3 **Resistance:** Ref +3, Per +2, Fort +1
Equipment:

- ◇ one-handed melee weapon and small shield **or** two light weapons
- ◇ light or medium armour
- ◇ any missile weapon and a throwing weapon

Special:
Fleet of Foot: add your Dex modifier to your SPD.
Critical Hit: your DMG increases by +10 against enemies with 0 or less hp.
Skirmishing: by spending 2 hp you can actively move one square without provoking an opportunity attack. You cannot exceed your SPD this way.

Mage

Primary Ability: Intelligence **Attack:** +0 **Magic:** +5 **Resistance:** Will +3, Per +2, Fort +1
Equipment:

- ◇ light melee weapon
- ◇ any missile weapon

Special:
Arcane Reach: Spellcasting-effects have a range of at least 6 without requiring you to apply any modifiers or spending additional hit points.
Spellmaster: you add your DMG to the damage caused by effects of the *Spellcasting* special rule.
Spellcasting: can make magic checks (1d20 + MB) to use the following effects as a special ability:

- Drain (Fort): the target loses 1d6 hit points. For every 5 or 6 you roll you restore 1 hp.
- Wound (Fort): roll 1d6. For every 5 or 6 you roll the target loses one wp.
- Damage (Ref): the target receives 1d6+1 points of damage.
- Entangle (Ref): the target's SPD is reduced by 1d3 until the end of the round.
- Telekinesis (Fort): Move the target 1d3 squares in any direction.

Leader

Primary Ability: Charisma **Attack:** +0 **Magic:** +5 **Resistance:** Will +3, Per +2, Ref +1
Equipment:

- ◇ one-handed melee weapon or light melee and light missile weapon
- ◇ light armour or small shield

Special:
Inspiring Presence: War Cry-effects affect at least a 5x5 area without requiring you to apply any modifiers or spending additional hit points.
Icon: you add your DMG to the number of hp restored by effects of the *War Cries* special rule.
War Cries: can make magic checks (1d20 + MB) to use the following effects as a special ability:

- Raise Morale: the target recovers 1d3+1 hit points.
- Weaken (Will): the damage of the target's next attack is reduced by 1d6.
- Fear (Will): move the target 1d3+1 squares away from you and your allies.
- Bolster : the target's DMG increases by 1d3+1 until the end of the round.
- Awe (Will): the target suffers a 1d3 penalty to all attack and defence rolls until the end of the next round.

Creating A Character

1) Your character's *ability scores* (Str, Dex, Int, Cha) all start at 10. You have 5 points to freely distribute among them and you may lower one ability score by 2 to get 2 additional points (but you can only lower one ability score). Your character starts at level 1 with 0 experience points.
2) Calculate the character's *ability modifiers*. An ability's modifier is used to calculate the other traits of your character later. The *ability modifier* equals the associated ability's (*score* – 10) / 2. Any fractions are rounded down.
3) Now the remaining traits are calculated (note any results from this step on a piece of scrap paper, as they are likely to be modified in the next step). Refer to the following table to figure out all remaining traits:

Trait	Calculation
AB	LVL + class bonus
MB	LVL + class bonus
DB	LVL + Dex modifier
DMG	LVL + Int modifier
HP	1d6 + 4 + Cha modifier
WP	5 + Str modifier
Fort	LVL + Str modifier + class bonus
Ref	LVL + Dex modifier + class bonus
Per	LVL + Int modifier + class bonus
Will	LVL + Cha modifier + class bonus

4) Select the character's class. This choice is very important as it determines how you play the game, especially in combat. A class only defines how the character performs in combat with rules; everything else can be invented or interpreted by you and GM. While the class for example might be called Mage here you still decide whether it describes a eerie and terrifying necromancer, a magician using fire to lay waste to anything that angers him or a benevolent healer that simply tries to make the world a better place. Upon this description all interaction with this character out of combat is based and also what this character is capable of that is not described with rules here. There may be no rules here for raising an army of rattling skeleton warriors or creating a fire that only scorches liars and thieves, but after all imagining and reacting to actions like this is what makes the game fun and encourages you to use your creativity!
5) Update any figures from step 3) that have changed and note them down on your character sheet together with your starting equipment. Ask the GM for additional equipment your character may get. It is also a good idea to think about the character's background and history now and tell the other players about it. Think of three adjectives describing your character; these are his *motivators* – they keep him going on and summarize his personality. You can describe your character in more detail – you are encouraged to do so – but your character can only have three motivators nevertheless.
6) Start Playing!

Playing the Game: Motivators and Conviction

In the beginning of the game your character has 1 conviction point (CP). Conviction points can be used any time to maximize the result of any single die. You receive a conviction point whenever your character acts according to his motivators. You can never have more conviction points than three plus half your level (rounded down). The GM may allow other uses for conviction.

Playing the Game: Character Advancement

For every combat won, your character receives 10 experience points, for every lost combat he receives 5. Remember that a combat counts as “won” when the enemies are overcome, no matter what means where used. Additionally the GM can award experience points to a character for excellent roleplaying, personal sacrifices and outstanding actions, but never more than 30 x the average character LVL of the party in total per session.

A character's LVL increases by one whenever he has collected 100 points of experience. Remember to recalculate any character traits that are level dependent such as the attack bonus and the resistances. When reaching a new level, the character's maximum number of hp increases by 1d6 + Cha modifier. When reaching a level that is divisible by (2nd, 4th, 6th, etc.) you may increase any ability **score** by 1. When reaching 10th level, your character may choose one special rule from another class to benefit from from now on.

Playing the Game: Using Magic and Special Abilities

For simplicity's sake, the term “magic” in this document also describes any other special abilities of a character, for example the use of rhetoric to determine the actions of other people. Probably any ability that requires a large amount of training and concentration can be handled with the rules presented here. Using such abilities requires the expenditure of hit points, representing the strain the characters put on themselves and fatigue in general. The process of using a magic special ability is composed of three parts: **Effect**, **Modifier** and **Execution**.

The **Effect** is either determined by the class (if it has an obvious combat use) or by the player (for all other effects). Combat related effects always have a range of 1, target an 1x1 area and last 1 round. Effects don't distinguish between friend or foe – any creature in the area is affected, including your allies.

Most effects specify a ***save*** – the ***Resistance*** of the targeted character used for the DC during the execution phase. Such effects are called ***opposed effects***. Targets that are willing are automatically affected.

Modifiers change the details of an effect, for example how far the target can be away. Applying modifiers to an effect costs you additional hit points and can increase the difficulty of using the special ability. The same modifier can be applied more than once, unless noted otherwise, though you can only apply as many as your LVL modifiers to a single use of a special ability. The modifiers shown here can always be applied to an effect, though you may use additional or other modifiers depending on your class. The modifiers listed here (the so called ***standard modifiers***) cost 2 hp each to apply. Casting a spell / using a special ability ***always costs at least 2hp.***

During the **Execution** the user pays the necessary hp before he makes the check to see whether the effect is applied successfully. Which character trait is used for making the check is given in the special ability's description (for combat related effects only).

Summary of using a special ability:

1. Choose the desired *Effect*
2. Choose any modifiers you want to apply
3. Choose the target of the special ability
4. Pay the hp cost for the modifiers and make the check specified by the effect; if the effect specifies a *save* the DC for the check equals 10 + the target's resistance bonus. If that is not the case, use the table below for finding the DC. The effect only affects its targets if this check is successful.

Standard modifiers:

- *Range*: the range increases by 2.
- *Area*: the length of the square targeted by the effect increases by 1.
- *Duration*: the duration of the effect increases by 1 (the effect is applied once each round it lasts).
- *Targets*: the spell targets one additional individual creature instead of an area.
- *Power*: if the effect specifies a save, the target suffers a -1 penalty to its resistance bonus.
- *Efficiency*: every numeric variable (including die) in the effect increases by 1.

Determining the DC for non-opposed effects

The check DC for non-opposed effects (e.g. out-of-combat effects or spells) depends on the amount of hit points spent to modify the effect.

HP spent	DC
2 - 6	10
7 - 12	15
13 - 18	20
19 - 24	25
25 - 30	30
31 - 36	35
37+	40

Playing the Game: Combat

Combat is one of the most complex topics in any role-playing game, so this chapter is quite rules-heavy. A combat is defined as any situation where characters are in danger of getting wounded or losing their lives due to a conscious effort taken by other creatures (also called “enemies”). In this chapter the term ***party*** refers to the player characters and ***enemies*** to any creatures that try to oppose them. Individual characters and creatures take one ***turn*** each and after all members of the party and the enemy have had their turns, a new ***round*** begins. Add the perception bonuses on both sides together. The side with the higher sum decides who is attacking. The attacking side is called ***aggressor*** whereas the other side is called the ***defender***.
A combat round represents 6 seconds of time passing for the characters. During combat, distance is measured in ***squares***. Use any size for a square you are comfortable with, though 5ft (1,5m) is recommended.

Combat Sequence:

1. Begin of the ***round***.
2. All ***aggressors*** take their turns in any order
3. All ***defenders*** take their turns in any order
4. End of the ***round***.

This sequence is repeated until one side is unable to continue the combat, surrenders or manages to escape.

During his turn a character can perform each of the following ***actions*** once, in any order:

- **Move:** Move up to your SPD in squares or retrieve an item from your backpack.
- **Standard:** Make an attack or use an item.
- **Minor:** shout an order, activate an item, drop to the ground, stand up, etc..

You can always perform an additional move action instead of a standard action.

Movement can be ***active*** or ***passive***. Active movement is the movement you make during your turn with a move action and the number of squares moved can never exceed your SPD. Passive movement is any movement caused by special effects or generally spoken any forced movement. Squares moved passively are never counted against your SPD, i.e. you can move an infinite number of squares passively. Movement through **difficult terrain** costs two squares per square of difficult terrain crossed (e.g. moving through 5 squares of difficult terrain requires at least a SPD of 10). A creature **cannot end its movement in a square occupied by an enemy.** The standard **SPD** for **human sized** creatures is **6**.

Opportunity Attacks:
All squares a character can attack with an equipped melee weapon are called the character's ***threat range***. Whenever an enemy moves out of a character's threat range (actively or passively), that character gets to make a an attack against that enemy (***opportunity attack***). Any character can only perform one opportunity attack per round.

Fighting with two weapons:
Characters wielding two weapons can make two attacks instead of one when taking a standard action. When making two attacks the character receives a -4 penalty to both attack rolls (-2 if one weapon is light).

Losing HP and WP:
A loss of hp represents small scratches, fading endurance or morale. After combat, characters can regain 1d6+Cha modifier hp for every two full levels they possess by taking a short rest of 5 minutes. This can only be done once after each combat; after that they regain their Cha modifier in hit points (but at least 1 hp) every 10 minutes of time passed.
Losing wound points means the character is physically harmed and in danger of losing his life. For every wound point lost, the character receives a -1 penalty to all rolls. Any character that has lost more wound points than his Str modifier can only move actively at half SPD. A character that has 0 wound points remaining is dead. Wound points recover at a rate of one per week.

Running the Game: Environmental Hazards

The player characters are likely to visit environments that are dangerous enough to pose a threat by themselves. The rules described here serve to determine the effects the environment has on the player characters and can be used by the GM to make terrain and climate play an more important role, requiring the players to plan and to be creative. Additionally these rules can be used to represent creature special attacks.

There are two types of hazards:

- ◇ **lethal** hazards deal **wp** and **hp** damage.
- ◇ **non-lethal** hazards deal **only hp** damage. If a character has no hp left he starts losing wp as from a normal attack (1 per 10 hp lost)

The damage done by a hazard of either type can belong to any of the following categories:

- ◇ **continuous** damage is applied in certain time intervals. The victim is entitled to a resistance check at every interval to avoid taking damage.
- ◇ **instant** damage is applied only once. The victim is entitled to a resistance check to avoid taking damage.
- ◇ **escalating** damage works like continuous damage, but the resistance check DC increases by +1 for every previous check.

Characters are subject to continuous and escalating damage as long as they find themselves in the dangerous area, or, if a specific duration duration is given, until that duration has expired.
The GM is free to increase the difficulty of any hazard, but should not increase it by more than the average character level in the party.
Examples:
Poison: lethal, continuous (every round; 2 rounds), Damage 1 wp + 1d6 hp, Fort DC 15
Suffocation: non-lethal, escalating (every round), Damage 1d6 hp, Fort DC 15
Extreme Temperature: non-lethal, escalating (every 10 minutes), Damage 2d6 hp, Fort DC 15
Trap: lethal, instant, Damage 1wp (2d6 hp on a successful resistance check), Ref DC 10
Loose Terrain: lethal, instant, Damage 1d6 wp + 1d6 hp, Ref DC 10 or Per DC 15
Losing the Way: non-lethal, escalating (every hour), Damage 4d6 hp, Per DC 10
Madness: non-lethal, escalating (every day), Damage 8d6 hp, Will DC 15
Hallucinations: lethal, escalating (every day), Damage 1 wp + 2d6 hp, Will DC 15 or Per DC 10

Running The Game: Enemies

The statistics of enemies are determined by the average character level of the PCs. All enemies share the same hit points, attack and defense bonuses and resistances. In addition to that, an enemy can have one or more special rules from the list below. A creature's damage is determined either by its size for natural weapons such as claws or by the weapon it uses. When creating a battle for the player characters the sum of the levels of all enemies should not exceed the sum of the PCs' levels.
Creature Statistics (to be modified by the table below):
HP: any creature receives 1d6 hp per level. **AB & DB:** +1 per level
Resistances: +level+3 for one resistance, +level for the other resistances
SPD: double for quadrupedal creatures of small or larger size.

Size Category	Height / Space	SPD	WP	DMG	HP per level	AB / DB
Fine	15cm / 0,125	1	0	1	-3	+8
Diminutive	30cm / 0,25	2	0	1d2	-2	+4
Tiny	60 cm / 0,5	3	0	1d3	-1	+2
Small	1,2m / 1	4	1	1d4	+0	+1
Medium	2,4m / 1	6	1	1d6	+0	+0
Large	4,8m / 2	8	1	1d8	+0	-1
Huge	9,6m / 3	10	2	1d10	+1	-2
Gargantuan	19,2m / 4	12	3	1d12	+2	-4
Colossal	38,4m / 6	14	4	2d6+2	+3	-8

Creature Special Abilities (choose one):
Regeneration: Regain 1 WP every minute (10 rounds).
Unbreakable: Damage received is decreased by 2.
Mindless: +20 bonus to Will; cannot make *attacks of opportunity.*
Charger: +10 damage with melee attacks after moving full SPD before the attack.
Swift: Suffer only half damage from attacks of opportunity.
Fly: able to move through the air and end movement in a square occupied by a non-flying creature. +2 bonus to damage rolls against non-flying creatures.
Leader: +2 bonus to attack and damage roll for all allied creatures within 18 squares.